

Standard USG-1: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the United States government—its origins and its functions.

USG-1.1 Summarize arguments for the necessity and purpose of government and politics, including the idea that politics enables a group of people with diverse opinions and interests to reach collective decisions, the idea that government gives people the security they need in order to reach their full potential, and the idea that the purposes of government include enhancing economic prosperity and providing for national security. (P, E)

Taxonomy Level: 2.4-B Understand Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

Students will have been exposed to the basic role and function of government as exemplified in history, why certain structures of government developed, (democracy, feudalism, totalitarian, etc...) and the philosophical considerations for the basis of governments. (Examples 6-3.1; 7-2.2; 7-5.4)

It is essential for students to know why government exists. Government is an institution that helps prevent social chaos and provides an avenue for people to work together in solving problems for the common good. It is an attempt to systemically provide structure for society, without which anarchy would abound. Students should be able to explain the role of government in resolving conflict arising from diverse opinions, in promoting economic security, and providing physical protection and defense. There should be a basic understanding that politics is the way in which decision-making is determined and implemented.

It is not essential for students to know about the creation of specific governments or how they were/are formed. While teachers may or may not choose to teach about the necessity of government within the context of political theory – “State of Nature” – it is not essential for students to know about specific political theories or associations with those theories within this indicator.

Assessment Guidelines:

The objective of this indicator is to summarize the necessity and purpose of government and politics. The primary focus of assessment should be to generalize why government (structure) and politics (process) are necessary. Appropriate assessments could allow students to theorize, and defend, about the state of society if government did not exist. It would be acceptable for students to compare how certain “needs” of society, such as defense, monetary systems, etc., would be met if government did not exist.